



Spring IWS Edition - March 2025

Editor: Debra Bruner.

Welcome to the Spring newsletter! I volunteered and accidentally became a board member. Note to self: watch what you wish for! I told Cherry I wanted to get more involved, and here I am, learning the ropes. Be kind!

From the President:

As I record my thoughts this afternoon, I can watch the sun painting shadows across my yard and my Helleborus beginning to test the warm soil. I am as ready as they are for Spring and all the varied activities, we IWS members have to look forward to.

“Watercolor is for the Lazy Artist”

For several years now, I have been telling fellow artists and art students that watercolor painting is for the lazy artist, for if you allow the water and pigment to merge and marry, they will do much of the work for you. In a recent issue of *The Art of Watercolor*, I ran across similar thoughts by Thomas Schaller, when he was asked, *“To what extent do you let watercolor evolve on its own during your painting?”* His answer echoed my own thoughts. “As anyone who paints in watercolor can tell you, the medium, like none other, definitely has a mind of its own. All of us probably start off by struggling against this inevitable quality, but in time, we start to find that it is wiser – and the results are far better. If we stop fighting...eventually something magical begins to occur...”

I hope his thoughts resonate for you too.

Upcoming Shows - I'm sure you will see articles in this newsletter from Beth Trott, about the upcoming Rotunda Show and from Scott Muscolo about our Annual Juried Exhibition. Make sure you participate and take in both shows, as well as regional shows in your area. Annual Meeting - We are also in the thick of making plans for our Annual Meeting. Following our survey last year, we have selected your favorite location...Stanley Idaho. We will again be at the Mountain Village Resort, and I am delighted to report that Jessica Bryant from Coeur d'Alene, will be teaching a 3-day workshop as part of the annual gathering. More information and prices to come soon but be sure to save the dates of September 11-13.

IWS50 the Anniversary- Another very exciting event to look forward to is our 50th Anniversary in 2026. Can you believe that we have been gathering and painting as a group in Idaho since 1976? I can remember reading a classified ad in the *Statesman* that year from Ruth Clark, looking for volunteers to help form a statewide watercolor society. I was fortunate to work with her and several current members for 6 months before I resumed my college studies. I am delighted that Nancy Inaba, Pam Grant and Joyce Green are collecting history of the organization and working on a fitting celebration. Watch for more from them.

Membership numbers down – It has been reported by our Regional Directors and our Membership Director that we have significantly fewer members than in previous years. They feel many members tried to renew their membership either on their phone or tablet.

Currently that option is not available. Be sure to type in the link: **idahowatercolorsociety.org** and go to “Join” to either renew your membership or become a member for the first time. “Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.” George Bernard Shaw

Hope your paintings are magical,
Carol HasBrouck Browning
President

The Loaded Brush:

By Hugh Mossman

PLAY IN THE MUD THIS SPRING

In a past Loaded Brush article, I referenced a painting by noted artist, Rex Brandt, that inspired me to strive for a clear, transparent approach to watercolor, something that most of us prefer. When my washes look like the residue of a mudslide, it usually means I have failed.

But wait, not so fast. I recently found contrary advice on a YouTube channel by Liron Yanconsky, someone who, I think, offers insightful observations about watercolor. Liron, referencing the work of Joseph Zbukvic, points out that not all muddy, opaque looking watercolors are failures. Indeed, many of Zbukvic's paintings have large areas covered with grey, colorless passages that appear overworked. No one would dispute, however, that Zbukvic is a world class master of watercolor. Why does it look good in his paintings and look like a sink hole in mine?

The key, Liron says, is that Zbukvic can place dull overworked areas in well designed shapes that are designed to contrast with areas that are light and transparent. As long as the shapes read well, they will accent, rather than distract from the transparent areas. I can paint mud as well as anyone, so I put Liron's lesson to the test. My reference photo of a woman with a pink hat gave me the opportunity to contrast a transparent figure against dull opaque shapes. I am not sure my resulting watercolor best illustrates the lesson, but you can get the idea, I hope. So this spring, try spending some time playing in the mud!



Rotunda Show Update: A Celebration of Art, Community & Collaboration

The 2025 Rotunda Show is still going strong, and what an **incredible** exhibition it has been so far! Since opening on March 1st, the Capitol halls have been filled with visitors taking in the stunning variety of watercolors on display. With over 75 works of art, each telling its own unique story, this show is a true celebration of the talent and vision of our IWS artists.

The opening reception was a **huge success**, drawing well over **300 attendees!** The energy in the room was electric—artists reconnecting, engaging with the public, and sharing their creative journeys. Guests took their time studying the artwork, casting their **Visitor's Choice Award** votes, and even inquiring about IWS membership.

Sales have been strong this year, with multiple paintings already finding new homes—and with several days left in the exhibition, there may still be more to come! Congratulations to all the artists who have made sales and to everyone whose work has sparked conversations and inspiration among visitors.

Regarding the **Visitor's Choice Awards**, as of Tuesday March 11th we have over 900 votes! It will take us a bit of time to tally them all, but once finalized, we will announce the winners via email, the IWS website, and social media—stay tuned!

Most importantly, this show would not be what it is without our **amazing volunteers**. From those who haul panels to the fourth floor, to those who contribute food for the reception, and everyone in between, this is truly a **team effort**. Your dedication makes this exhibition possible, and we are so grateful for all you do.

Thank you all for being part of this incredible event—we can't wait to see how the final days unfold! Beth Trott

IWS Annual Capitol Rotunda Art Show Chairperson



Will Nelson Biography

1/8/25

By Nancy Inaba, IWS History Project and 50th Anniversary.

Introduction:

IWS will be celebrating its 50th year anniversary in 2026. This interview and biography is part of IWS's history project to preserve our stories and photos of the last 50 years. I have come to learn of Will Nelson's many contributions and accomplishments, along with many other artists who contributed to create the artistic landscape that is Idaho. I became interested in the history of IWS when Craig Collett of Roots Family History, offered an award for the Annual Show in honor of Will Nelson.

The article below is a biography of Will Nelson. He created a foundational artistic standard to the arts in Idaho. He was a contributor, a mentor and an inspiration to the artworld in Idaho and around the world. The information is based on contributions from multiple

sources and an interview with Elaine Nelson, his gracious wife, along with Joyce Green, Pam Grant and myself. The interview (below in the box) is called, Lessons in Still Life, written by Craig Collett and has direct quotes from Will.

Biography of Will Nelson:

Will Nelson was born in 1932 in Twin Falls, Idaho. "Will grew up on the Lazy J-L cattle ranch nestled in the quiet open country of Southern Idaho. The wildlife, terrain, and seasons of the high desert country provided an endless source of inspiration for his interest in art." Will was an early influence in the Idaho Artworld, along with Gaye Hoopes, Dwight Williams, Dr. Stephen Beck and John Kilmaster. He taught watercolor painting at the Maple Grove Grange. Many IWS members took watercolor classes from him. He lived by his motto, "Where there's a Will, there's a way."

He graduated from the ArtCenter College in Los Angeles and joined the illustration staff at Stephens Biondi DeCicco Studio in L.A. When starting as a new grad, he was dubbed "The Wonder Kid." His work took him far and wide. Over the last 50 years, his illustrations have appeared in national and international publications such as National Geographic Society, Smithsonian Institute, Time Life, McGraw Hill, and Splash 12, The Best of Watercolor. He was chosen for the Duck's Unlimited Idaho state print for 2004, and the Salmon and Steelhead Unlimited state print in 2006. The Idaho Forest Products Commission chose him to illustrate a poster "Look to the Forest" to be used in all Idaho public school libraries. As well as many other awards and exhibitions.

He returned to Idaho in 1963, and he began teaching water color in the 80's in addition to his art

practice. His intention for teaching was to "create a love of art." He and his wife Elaine raised three daughters and now enjoy 9 grandchildren. His house is filled with books, resources, scientific studies and interests ranging far and wide. He knew his subjects deeply and in great detail. For example, he grew a large garden to accurately include the plants included in his art work.

In 1987, China opened its borders to the west for a scientific expedition to the Wolong Panda Preserve in Northern China. Will was chosen as the artist for this elite expedition. He painted the Giant Panda and cub, which led to environmental paintings for Chevron Corporation and the Bradford Exchange. He went on to paint over 20 endangered animals. His prints were sold worldwide as a limited edition.

Lessons in Still Life

Excerpts from an essay written by Craig Collett, based on an interview with Will Nelson "Still Life requires research. Everything that fascinates me the most becomes the subject for my next painting. It's an ongoing learning process. Every subject that I see, I have to delve into and study," Will instructs as he begins to explain his creative process. "I'll see an object that looks like something that should be painted, and I think, well, can I relate it to make a composition?" he says as he shows me his drafting table with a few objects on it. "Putting all those pieces together, I would hope that anybody looking at it might spark

an interest in that period of time.” A great deal of thought and intention has been the mastermind of these creations and I’m anxious to hear the thoughts of a man whose whole life story is captured in decades of art. “Everything has a past and a future,” Will explains, “each object has a story to tell. You have to learn how to tell that story through composition and brush strokes.” His shelves are full of books he calls ‘subjects’. Everything is paintable, and everything that is painted is first learned. A particular painting catches my eye. It features a French helmet and other early 19th century objects. He teaches me, “You can compose a story, like this piece in the hall. I went to the antique shop and found that helmet. I remember I asked the lady if there were any other pieces that go with this. I wanted to do something that relates to the time of that helmet. That became a Napoleonic story. I’ve always tried to do that, tell a story with the objects—One piece supports another, and another.” As the backstory of the antique shop is related to me, the story of the painting comes to life while my eyes move from the helmet to French War books, and a marble death mask of the Frenchman. Each object is of the greatest pictorial fidelity. “I paint one object at a time. I got a lot of criticism from other artists for doing that. I’ve always felt a need to complete, as well as I can, each section of a painting.” “It’s the initial drawing where I try to correlate it all. Today I tell my students that drawing is critical. Most of the trouble that you find as you’re painting is because you didn’t draw it properly. To correct that in paint is really hard to do. When you’re drawing something, it’s a challenge to draw, and you bring that line along that’s nice and clean, and it’s exactly what you had in your head, that’s very satisfying. “Will’s first love in art is Still Life. The endless paintings reflect thousands of hours of study from thousands of books. ...If you have the opportunity to ask Will yourself which is the greatest masterpiece of them all, he’ll kindly let you know, “My next one.”

Will’s last inspiration:

Will Nelson passed away in 2014 surrounded by loved ones. Elaine allowed one of his young students to visit him at his bedside. The student mourned that she would never be able to paint again without him. In response, he advised her to “paint from your heart.” Will left the world a better place,





Update on the 45th Annual Juried Membership Exhibition

Art Call opened on Saturday Feb. 1 and will close on Mar. 20 at 9:00 PM MST. So far we have 49 submissions. Last year we had 95 paintings in the exhibit including the 30 we hung that were not in the exhibit proper. The exhibit lasts for 2 months at the Water's Edge Gallery in the Riverside Hotel, and the traffic at the hotel is terrific. This is a great opportunity for you to sell a painting. We are planning on having enough advertisers to expand our catalog to 28 pages in the new larger format. It is our goal to have enough advertisers in our catalog to offset its cost and maybe even drive a little revenue. Our advertising space is a terrific bargain as an entire quarter page of the catalog is only \$175. You may have a vendor in your area who'd like to participate. Our donors have already begun submitting cash and merchandise awards to our Awards Coordinator Shaun Muscolo and we are anticipating a healthy prize pool. Remember, the painting must have been completed in the last 2 years! If in doubt as to what 'completed' means, contact me (Scott Muscolo) and we'll discuss.

Good luck and I'm looking forward to seeing your entry!
Scott

Scott Muscolo, IWS Annual Juried Exhibition Chair
805-795-0252

" The Art of Taking a Break" – Linda Aman-Aman Arts

I am working on a large mixed-media painting, about the size of a double bed that has been a BIG learning experience. I took on this challenge not only because of its size but also because I wanted to push myself beyond my comfort zone with new techniques. I guess I like taking on new adventures.

As I continue working on the ginormous painting, I realize just how much I am learning along the way, the education is emerging. I expect it to turn out well, but as one of my art students says, "the struggle is real". Working with other artists I find we often have puzzling paintings from time to time.

When to pause

There are moments when it is best to step back and reflect rather than pushing on. Consider Pausing when:

- You can no longer see what you need to do next, you are stuck
- The painting might be finished, and you need to step away and have a fresh look to be sure
- Frustrated, and you no longer feel you are creating well
- Your painting looks overworked, your inspiration is fading
- You second guess every decision
- You feel emotionally and physically tired

How-to Step Away without losing your momentum

- Take in progress photos as you work, you may see something you did that is working or not
- View from a distance or reversed in a mirror-for new reveals
- Take a break, go for a walk, change your workspace or do something entirely different
- You will know when to come back and work on it
- Ask someone for a fresh perspective
- Ask a trusted artist or mentor for feedback, a critique.
- Research more ideas of howto make the painting communicate what you want to say
- Check list of what you "have and don't have"

I work on a painting until it is finished, and I am happy with it or have learned everything I can possibly learn from it. Sometimes what I see as "failed" in a painting is a great element for future paintings. I may have just put that color, texture, shape, composition etc. in the wrong painting. My oops help me grow as an artist. The more I take risks, the more I will learn, as well as have new puzzles to solve.

Trust yourself

Use your paintings from the past to encourage and guide you. Keep the brush strokes moving. Remember I say

“You are the only one who can paint just like you! “

www.amanarts.com ©Linda Aman March



East Region News – Winter 2025

Les Scott

Our first regional show for 2025 took place at the College of Eastern Idaho (CEI) in February. We displayed 21 paintings by 19 artists in the main hallway of the CEI Administration Building for the viewing pleasure of CEI students, staff, faculty, and the public. Our next regional show will be held at The Art Museum of Eastern Idaho (TAM) from May 1st through June 7th. We held a regional meeting at the Willard Art Center on February 11th where we had a demonstration of lighting techniques using a model with studio lights, reflectors, and filters.

In January a list of 6 questions was sent to regional members asking for their feedback and input about regional activities such as workshops, meetings, paint-outs, etcetera. Unfortunately, only 5 members (0.9%) responded. This makes it difficult to plan activities for the year but I really appreciate the input that was provided, and it will be taken into consideration.

Thanks,

Les Scott

Les Scott

Green Stag Art

Gallery 12

Idaho Watercolor Society – East Region Director

greenstagart@gmail.com

208-589-0858

South Central Region: Winter 2025

Connie Pepper

Spring is in the air and our South Central members are out picking rocks! We will be learning how to paint rocks with acrylics at our next session. The topics for paintings on our rocks include animals, fish and bird faces, mandala designs, flowers, and anything else that our group wants to paint. We will work together to come up with designs that we can place along the trail along the Snake River Canyon path.

There is already a long line of painted rocks along the path, and our additions will help to lengthen the art display.

Our group meets each 2nd Tuesday of the month and has a painting theme for each meeting. We do not meet in the summer.

Connie Pepper

conniepepperarts@gmail.com

